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PD

This is one of the most
interesting telegrams I've
ever read. No wonder
the message is mired.

Pat

NSC Declassification Review [EO 13526]
DECLASSIFY IN FULL
by John Powers on 2/16/2018

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INCOMING
TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-15

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E.O. 12065: GDS-1 10-9-65 (CASTRO, RAUL H) OR-M
TAGS: AR, MARR
SUBJECT: XX UNITAS: JOINT US/ARGENTINA NAVAL OPERATIONS

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. STRAINED AND COOL RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND US NAVIES WERE GREATLY IMPROVED BY ARGENTINA'S DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN XX UNITAS OPERATIONS. DURING MY DAY IN AND DAY OUT CONTACTS WITH ARGENTINA NAVAL PERSONNEL IT HAD BECOME QUITE EVIDENT DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS RELATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINE AND AMERICAN NAVIES--EVEN THOUGH PROPER--WERE FAR FROM BEING FRIENDLY. DURING MY FIRST YEAR IN ARGENTINA, EVERYTIME I CAME IN CONTACT WITH ADMIRAL MASSERA--THEN NAVY COMMANDER--I URGED HIM FOR ARGENTINA UNITAS PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT VAGUE AND NON-COMMITTAL, IT BECAME EVIDENT MASSERA WAS UNHAPPY WITH OUR FOREIGN POLICY, REAFFIRMING HIS VIEWS BY GOA'S NON-PARTICIPATION IN UNITAS. LAMBRUSCHINI'S DISTRESS OVER OUR FOR POLICY IS ALSO WELL KNOWN, EXCEPT THAT ADMIRAL LAMBRUSCHINI OFFERED MORE FLEXIBILITY AND OFTEN EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO WORK WITH US NAVAL FORCES.

3. WITH SOME COAXING ADMIRAL LAMBRUSCHINI FINALLY MADE IT KNOWN ARGENTINA WOULD PARTICIPATE IN XX UNITAS NAVAL OPERATIONS. HE PLACED

ONE CAVEAT AND THAT WAS OF IT BEING A LOW-KEY OPERATION--WITHOUT THE USUAL HULLABALLO AND FANFARE. I VISITED PUERTO BELGRANO ON THE LAST DAY OF NAVAL MANEUVERS. I WAS MET WITH THE TRADITIONAL BASE COURTESIES AT THE AIRPORT THEN TAKEN FOR A COMPLETE TOUR OF PUERTO BELGRANO'S NAVAL BASE. I CAME IN CONTACT WITH OFFICERS AND SAILORS OF BOTH NAVIES. I HAD NEVER SEEN A CLOSER AND FRIENDLIER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONNEL OF BOTH NAVIES AS I HAD WITNESSED THAT DAY.

4. ON THAT EVENING (SEPTEMBER 30), A BUFFET-DINNER DANCE WAS HELD AT THE RECREATION HALL. THIS BUFFET-DINNER WAS HOSTED BY ADMIRAL TORTI OF THE ARGENTINE NAVY WITH REAR ADMIRAL JOHN J. ECKLUND (USN) AND I AS HONORED GUESTS. A TYPICAL NEW YEAR'S EVE SPIRIT SEEMED TO PREVAIL THROUGHOUT THE EVENING, THE ONLY INGREDIENT MISSING WAS THE SINGING OF "AULD LANG SYNE". IT WAS APPARENT THAT GOOD RELATIONS HAD REACHED ITS HIGH PEAK. THIS WAS BORNE OUT IN MY INTERVIEWS WITH OFFICERS OF BOTH NAVAL FORCES.

5. DURING THE EVENING I HAD LONG CHATS WITH ADMIRAL TORTI, THE SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT. HE MANIFESTED SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS OVER THE SUCCESS OF THE JOINT OPERATION. HE SPOKE WARMLY OF THE UNITED STATES AND HOPED THE PREVAILING FRIENDLY SPIRIT WAS OF A PERMANENT NATURE AND NOT JUST A ONE-SHOT GOODWILL INJECTION. HIS COUNTER-PART-REAR ADMIRAL

JOHN JOSEPH ECKLUND--LIKEWISE ECHOED HIS REMARKS. ADMIRAL ECKLUND ALSO EXUDED PRIDE OVER THE SUCCESSFUL MANEUVERS, BUT FOREMOST HE WAS PLEASED OVER THE FRIENDLY COMRADESHIP REGAINED AFTER A TWO-YEAR'S LAPSE OF NON-ACTION.

6. DURING MY TOUR OF PUERTO BELGRANO BASE, WORD CAME TO ME THAT CAPTAIN ALLARA, COMMANDER OF 25 DE MAYO AIRCRAFT CARRIER AND FORMER DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, WANTED ME TO VISIT HIS SHIP. THIS WAS DONE. CAPTAIN ALLARA WAS EXTREMELY HAPPY TO SEE ME--AS FOR OVER ONE YEAR HE AND I SHARED MANY OF THE THEN EXISTING USG/GOA PROBLEMS. DURING HIS DAYS IN THE FONOFF, CAPT. ALLARA HAD ALWAYS BEEN ACCESSIBLE AND NEVER STOOD ON PROTOCOL. EVEN THOUGH DURING THOSE DAYS, USG HAD MUCH MORE SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS WITH GOA THAN TODAY. HE, NEVERTHELESS, ALWAYS LISTENED, GAVE GOA'S SIDE OF THE STORY BUT WAS NEVER HOSTILE. IT CAN BE SAID ALLARA TENDS TO THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. *Political murder, torture, arbitrary imprisonment, and so on, presumably.*

7. DURING MY CONVERSATION WITH ALLARA, HE BROUGHT OUT THE FACT THAT TIMBERMAN'S RELEASE HAD STIRRED A NEGATIVE IMPACT AMONG BASE MILITARY PERSONNEL. HE EXPLAINED THE TIMING OF THE RELEASE WAS OFF. HE STATED MOST BASE PERSONNEL INTERPRETED TIMBERMAN'S RELEASE AS A SIGN OF GOA'S WEAKNESS. HE FELT THIS WOULD TAKE AN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS ON THEIR PART TO PLACATE BASE PERSONNEL. MY MEETING WITH ALLARA TOOK PLACE A DAY AFTER GENERAL MENENDEZ' ABOVE ATTEMPT TO DEFEY THE VIDELA GOVT. HE INTERPRETED MENENDEZ'S MOVE AS A SAD ONE AND ILL ADVISED. HE STATED THERE WERE OTHER INTELLECTUAL AUTHORS WHO HAD GIVEN LIP SERVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO MENENDEZ. ALLARA THEN MADE AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION ABOUT THE IMAGE OF THE MILITARY. HIS VIEW WAS *The Army's performance can be compared to that of the military.* MILITARY GOVERNMENT WAS LOSING PUBLIC SUPPORT AND WAS ON THE DOWNWARD TREND. ALLARA EXPLAINED THE TIME WAS RIGHT FOR GOA TO START USING CIVILIAN PERSONNEL. HE CONCLUDED BY PREDICTING A LONG AND TROUBLESOME ROAD AHEAD FOR THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. HE DID NOT FORESEE A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE FIVE YEARS.

8. NOTWITHSTANDING CAPT. ALLARA'S RATHER DOUR FORECAST ON MILITARY GOVERNMENT, I AM CONVINCED THAT BOTH NAVIES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES BY THE JOINT UNITAS XX EXERCISE. THE TWO YEAR HIATUS WAS POLITICALLY BASED BUT THE CURRENT NAVY COMMANDER HAS RE-ASSESSED RELATIONS FOR THIS YEAR AT LEAST. THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED HAVE FOUND A RENEWED BASIS FOR COOPERATION IN HEMISPHERIC NAVAL MANEUVERS. HOW THE OPERATIONS WILL BE VIEWED NEXT YEAR--ESPECIALLY BY NAVY HEADQUARTERS POLITICAL ADVISORS, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. ARGENTINA NAVY JOINT OPERATIONS ARE AS HARD TO FORETELL 12 MONTHS IN ADVANCE AS ANY OTHER POLITICAL DECISION.

CASTRO

I think I'm going to be sick.

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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